

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS TEGUCIGALPA 001495

SIPDIS

FOR PD/WHA (MBUCKLEY); IIP/G/WHA DIPASQUALE; EB/EPPD DCLUNE;
USTR AGASH
INFO IIP/T/ES
EMBASSIES FOR PAOS, IOs,

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KPAO](#) [HO](#) [PA](#) [ETRD](#) [USTR](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON CAFTA, JUNE 25, 2003

1. Op-ed by Rodil Rivera on Tegucigalpa-based liberal daily "La Tribuna" on 6/25 entitled "The Fifth Column of CAFTA".
". plain and simple, Guatemala is acting as the fifth column of the U.S. negotiators, to force us to give in on the few points where Central America has presented some resistance. In other words, our Guatemalan `brothers' are helping to twist our arm. If there remains any doubt about it, we only need to read what Barbara Bowie-Whitman stated in the plain words of trade specialists, `If anyone wants to be more ambitious in its offer, we can reach an agreement faster'."

"About the chance of Guatemala withdrawing its proposal, Regina Vargo answered for Salomon Cohen, the lead Guatemalan negotiator, saying, `Guatemala can't do that, because it's impossible to turn in a product offered with a zero-tariff for one with a higher tariff. we can't go forward this way'. This means that this is no longer a negotiation, it is a mere puppet show where Vargo is a ventriloquist and Cohen the U.S. puppet."

"Is there anything we can do against a decision already taken by the U.S.? Is there any chance that CAFTA could actually be somewhat beneficial for Honduras and Central America, as some people think? I don't know. I'm firmly convinced that this criticism may help our negotiators and private entrepreneurs to do the best they can to get some benefits from CAFTA and, at least, to exclude agricultural products from the agreement."

Palmer